



AN INTERNAL MEMO FROM THE NATIONAL SPARKS DEPARTMENT, OFFICE OF HUMANS' RESOURCES

How to pick a good walking stick

Hi Friends,

It's nice when a tree decides to donate one of their thin arms to help us endure a long trail. I'm talking about walking sticks of course.

A walking stick has a plethora of uses: balance, protection, destroying spider webs, whacking older siblings, and of course: trail cred.

However, there are a lot of common mistakes people make when selecting a walking stick. This guide will help you find the perfect pole for trekking.

The best stick is the one you have.

First of all, don't be a snob: pick up whatever stick you see. Perhaps the stick you just passed is the best you'll find on the trail. A technique we endorse: pick up the first available stick and improve from there. If you use the stick you have to compare with the sticks you find, you'll upgrade as you go. It's a fun game, and you'll never be without some kind of walking stick.

It's gotta be wood.

Now we might seem a little snobby here, but it's a "stick" for a reason. Please don't pick up a rod you found by a construction site. Don't bring a golf club. Skiing is fun but leave the poles for the slopes. The feeling of a piece of wood in your hand touching the ground as you bask in the forest will center your soul.

Don't go store-bought.

A store-bought walking stick goes against everything a walking stick stands for. You may not realize it but us outdoorsy types have a lot in common with punk rockers: we're DIY, we don't sell-out, and we rarely shower. So a store-bought waking stick is like buying a Sex Pistols necktie (I just looked it up and this actually exists, but you get the point).

A good rule of thumb is to never go store-bought. Unless it's for sun-screen (learned that the hard way).

That's a snake.

Don't pick that up. It's definitely a snake.

Leave it for the next person.

We know. You just bonded with your stick during this hike and now you want to take it home. Then what? Exactly. Just leave it for the next person to enjoy. Pay it forward. C'mon. Seriously. Were you going to hang it on the wall in your home? It's a stick...

